

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OES-07 OMB-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 IO-13 DLOS-09
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4651

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

SECDEF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 5183

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, EFIS, KS, CH

SUBJECT: PRC SEIZURE ROK FISHING BOAT

REFS: A) SEOUL 4712; B) SEOUL 4783; C) SEOUL 4953;
D) STATE 140314; E) SEOUL 5070; F) PEKING 1235

SUMMARY: ROK MOFA ISSUES STATEMENT CRITICIZING CHINESE FOR FISHING BOAT INCIDENTS AND CALLING FOR CONSULTATIONS AND INVESTIGATION. MOFA OFFICIAL REVIEWS INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ROKG CONCERNING KOREAN FISHING BOAT UNP'SA NO. 3 PRESUMED ABDUCTED BY CHINESE ADDING BACKGROUND AND REITERATING KOREAN REQUEST FOR U.S. GOOD OFFICES. END SUMMARY

1. MOFA SPOKESMAN HONG IL ISSUED OFFICIAL STATEMENT JUNE 21 CRITICIZING CHINESE FOR FISHING INCIDENTS AND SPECIFICALLY PROTESTING FOR FIRST TIME ABDUCTION OF
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UNP'S NO. 3. MOFA STATEMENT WHICH IS FIRST IT HAS MADE ON THIS SUBJECT REPLIES TO JUNE 19 PRC OFFICIAL HSIN HUA BROADCAST (REF F) PROTESTING KOREAN FISHING BOATS' INTRUSION INTO CHINESE WATERS RESULTING IN DAMAGE TO CHINESE FISHING EQUIPMENT, AND DEMANDING KOREANS EXERCISE RESTRAINT. KOREA PROTESTS CHINESE FISHERMENS' ACTIONS NOTING PRC STILL HOLDS UNP'A NO. 3 AND CREW ABDUCTED JUNE 5 AND REQUESTING RELEASE ON HUMANITARIAN

GROUND. STATEMENT SAYS ROK FISHERMEN HAVE EXERCISED RESTRAINT IN INTEREST OF PREVENTING INCIDENTS BY CONFINING FISHING ACTIVITIES TO LIMITED AREAS. STATEMENT REITERATES ROKG JUNE 4 PROPOSAL FOR KOREA-CHINA OFFICIAL OR INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS IN INTEREST OF ESTABLISHING ORDERLY SYSTEM OF FISHING OFF THE CHINA COAST, AND ADDS PROPOSAL FOR JOINT OR THIRD PARTY INVESTIGATION OF UNP'S INCIDENT.

2. IN JUNE 20 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, MOFA EAST ASIA DIVISION II CHIEF KANG CHONG-WON REVIEWED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ROKG CONCERNING UNP'A NO. 3 FISHING BOAT AND DESCRIBED BACKGROUND OF EVENTS, STRESSING KOREAN HOPES TO DISCUSS FISHING PROBLEMS WITH THE CHINESE, AND REITERATING KOREAN REQUEST FOR U.S. GOOD OFFICES. KANG SAID KOREANS ASSUME, ON BASIS WIRELESS TRANSMISSIONS FROM UNP'A WHICH AS YET CONSTITUTE ONLY HARD INFORMATION THEY HAVE CONCERNING INCIDENT, THAT CHINESE FIRST ABDUCTED CAPTAIN, AND THEN BOAT AND REMAINING SEVEN CREWMEN JUNE 5 ABOUT 120 MILES SOUTHWEST OF KOREAN SOHUKSAN ISLAND. TIMES AND SUMMARIES OF WIRELESS TRANSMISSIONS FOLLOW:

0700:

FIVE CHINESE FISHING BOATS SURROUND UNP'A; TAKE KOREAN CAPTAIN CHON PYON-HWAN ABOARD; DEPART TOWARDS CHINA.

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1325:

UNP'A, FOLLOWING CHINESE FISHING BOATS TOWARD CHINESE COAST, TURNS BACK TOWARD KOREA AFTER SIGHTING ARMED CHINESE VESSEL, PRESUMABLY COAST GUARD.

1940:

ONE FISHERMAN IN UNP'A REPORTED SHOT IN LEG BY PURSUING CHINESE.

KANG SAID THAT BY 2000 HOURS JUNE 5 WIRELESS TRANSMISSIONS FROM UNP'A CEASED. IN ABSENCE ANY WORD SINCE, ROKG PRESUMES CHINESE ALSO SEIZED BOAT AND SEVEN REMAINING CREW AT THAT TIME.

3. ACCORDING TO ROKG, EIGHT MISSING KOREANS PRESUMED ABDUCTED BY CHINESE ARE:

CAPTAIN CHON PYON-HWAN AGE (35)

CHIEF ENGINEER YI KI-MAN AGE (31)

CREWMEN:

KIM YU-POK (38)

PAK MYONG-SON (22)

SIN TONG-YOL (30)

KIM YANG-HA (47)

MUN UNG-KYU (30)

PAK YONG-MAN (23)

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4. KANG SAID THAT FISHING BOAT INCIDENTS SUCH AS THIS ONE OCCUR FREQUENTLY DURING THE APRIL TO JUNE FISHING SEASON WHEN LARGE NUMBERS OF CHINESE, TAIWANESE, JAPANESE AND KOREAN FISHERMEN CONGREGATE OFF THE CHINESE COAST. ACCORDING TO KANG THE KOREANS FISH USING A STATIONARY STOW NEW; THE CHINESE PULL THEIR NETS THROUGH THE WATER USING LONG LINES. WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF BOATS IN THE AREA, THE CHINESE LINES AND NETS ARE OCCASIONALLY CUTOFF, AND KANG SPECULATES SUCH AN ACCIDENT COULD HAVE BEEN THE PROXIMATE OR REMOTE CAUSE OF THE UNP'A INCIDENT.

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5. KANG SAID THERE HAS BEEN ONE OTHER SERIOUS INCIDENT THIS YEAR. ROKG CLAIMS THAT FROM MAY 16 TO 18, A TOTAL OF 40 CHINESE FISHING BOATS ESCORTED BY FIVE OR SIX ARMED VESSELS SURROUNDED GROUPS OF KOREAN FISHING VESSELS ABOUT 90 MILES SOUTHWEST OF SOHUKSAN ISLAND (ROUGHLY SAME AREA AS UNP'A INCIDENT) AND CAUSED ABOUT \$200 THOUSAND DAMAGE TO KOREAN BOATS AND FISHING EQUIPMENT. CHINESE ALSO ABDUCTED KOREAN FISHING VESSEL MYONG CHIN AND CREW, TAKING BOAT TO NANTUNG PORT NORTH OF SHANGHAI MAY 19, AFTERWARD RELEASING BOAT AND CREW MAY 25, KANG SAID CHINESE FORCED MYONG CHIN FISHERMEN TO SIGN STATEMENTS THEY HAD BEEN FISHING IN CHINESE TERRITORY. KANG ADDED THERE HAVE BEEN PREVIOUS INCIDENTS EACH YEAR, ESPECIALLY DURING THE BUSY APRIL-JUNE SEASON.

6. MOFA PROTESTED MAY 16 18 INCIDENTS ON JUNE 4 IN OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY HONG IL AND CALLED FOR OFFICIAL OR CONFIDENTIAL

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INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH CHINESE ON FISHING PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH CHINESE HAVE NOT YET RESPONDED TO KOREAN PROPOSAL, KANG TOLD EMBOFF ROKG STILL HOPES FOR TALKS, NOTING THAT JAPANESE WERE ABLE TO ARRANGE SEVERAL INFORMAL FISHING AGREEMENTS WITH CHINESE FOR TWENTY YEARS BEFORE FINALLY SIGNING OFFICIAL AGREEMENT AUGUST 1975.

7. KANG SAID GUIDELINES OF RESTRAINT ROKG PROVIDES ITS OWN FISHERMEN AIM AT PREVENTING INCIDENTS RATHER THAN REACTING IN CASE CHINESE SEIZE KOREAN BOATS. NO ARMED GUARDS ACCOMPANY KOREAN FISHING BOATS. ROKG URGES ITS FISHERMEN TO FISH IN LARGE GROUPS, AND TO STAY 30 MILES EAST OF THE MAO TSE-TUNG LINE ESTABLISHED BY THE JAPAN-PRC FISHING AGREEMENT AUGUST 15, 1975. (KANG REQUESTED THAT IF WE DISCUSS KOREAN RESTRAINT WITH THE CHINESE, WE REFRAIN FROM SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION OF THE LINES KOREANS USE, SINCE THAT WOULD BE A POINT A ISSUE SHOULD THE CHINESE EVER AGREE TO TALKS).

8. FINALLY, KANG REITERATED ROKG'S REQUEST FOR U.S. GOOD OFFICES IN ATTEMPTING TO INQUIRE AND POSSIBLY ARRANGE RELEASE OF UNP'S AND CREW, STRESSING THAT WITH BRITISH

REFUSAL (REF E), U.S. CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION IS PRACTICALLY
KOREANS' ONLY HOPE. KANG SUGGESTED THAT SHORT OF OFFICIAL
U.S. ACTIONS, NEWSMEN IN PEKING MIGHT ELICIT SOME INFORMATION
FROM CHINESE ON FATE OF UNP'A BY RAISING QUESTION AT NEWS
CONFERENCES. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF, KANG ALSO SAID ROKG
REQUESTED INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS ASSISTANCE LAST WEEK, BUT
HAS NO REPLY YET.
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